

Message Text

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42

ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 DRC-01 RSC-01 PC-10

USIA-15 DODE-00 AGR-20 INT-08 COME-00 FDRE-00 /164 W

----- 105377

P R 081100Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1870

USMISSION ECBRUSSELS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS NOUAKCHOTT 122

AFDROUGHT

USEC FOR MARTIN, PARIS FOR HELMAN, ROME FOR FODAG, MONROVIA
FOR BROWN

EO 11652:NA

SUBJECT: TRANSPORT/DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD IN SAHEL

REF: STATE 024994, NOUAKCHOTT 101 AND 115 (NOTAL)

1. NOUAKCHOTT REFTELS (INFOED USEC AND BEING REPEATED MONROVIA)
CONTAIN MOST INFORMATION REQUESTED STATE REFTEL. WILL HOWEVER
RECAPITULATE AND EXPAND COMMENTS AS FOLLOWS:

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2. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION. PRINCIPAL TRANSPORT BOTTLENECKS

LAST YEAR RESULTED FROM POOR MAINTENANCE TRUCK FLEET, SHORTAGE OF MOTOR FUEL AT PROVINCIAL DEPOTS, EXCEPTIONALLY POOR CONDITION OF UNIMPROVED TRACKS WHICH SERVE MOST OF MAURITANIA, AND FAILURE PREPOSITION STOCKS OF GRAIN IN AREAS SUBJECT TO BEING CUT-OFF FROM OVERLAND ACCESS BY EVEN LIGHT RAINS. STORAGE CAPACITY WAS RELATIVELY MINOR FACTOR LAST YEAR, BUT LOOMS LARGER THIS YEAR AS GIRM MOVES PREPOSITION STOCKS PRIOR TO ON-SET RAINS. MOST PRESSING PROBLEM NOW, HOWEVER, IS REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT ABOUT HALF OF GIRM 160-TRUCK EMERGENCY GRAIN TRANSPORT FLEET, WHICH CURRENTLY SIDE-LINED FOR LACK OF SPARE PARTS. END SUMMARY.

3. GIRM IS MAKING NO RPT NO MAJOR CHANGES IN BASIC TRANSPORT-DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, WHICH LAST YEAR PROVED PERHAPS MOST EFFECTIVE IN SAHEL REGION. GOVERNMENT RELIEF COORDINATOR (MINHEALTH) DOES, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZE NEED EFFECT IMPROVEMENTS IN ORDER AVOID WHAT FOR HIM WOULD BE EMBARRASSING REPEAT OF LAST YEAR'S COSTLY AIRLIFT EFFORT. HE IS MOVING TO PURCHASE WITH GIRM FUNDS 80 TWELVE-TON LORRIES FOR DELIVERY MARCH-APRIL IF POSSIBLE, AND HE HAS COMMITMENT FROM FED TO SUPPLY SOONEST 80 ADDITIONAL LARGE TRUCKS AND OTHER TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE WITH VALUE DOLLARS 2.6 MILLION. QUESTION, HOWEVER, REMAINS AS TO WHETHER TRUCKS CAN BE DELIVERED FAST ENOUGH TO HAVE IMPACT BEFORE RAINS DESCEND. GIRM IS ALSO WORKING TO REVAMP DOMESTIC MOTOR FUEL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM. IT PLANS PURCHASE ASAP SOME 50 TANK TRUCKS FOR TRANSPORT MOTORE FUELS TO INTERIOR TOWNS. MINHEALTH IS ALSO SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM UN AND BILATERAL DONORS (PRINCIPALLY FRENCH AND GERMANS) IN PROVIDING READY SUPPLY SPARE PARTS AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR ENLARGED TRUCK FLEET.

4. IN OUR ESTIMATION, GIRM MINHEALTH AND ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF--WHOSE TROOPS DRIVE FOOD TRUCKS AND SUPERVISE PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION EMERGENCY GRAIN--WILL CONTINUE AS EXCEPTIONALLY EFFECTIVE TEAM IN MANAGING TRANSPORT AND DISTRIBUTION EMERGENCY SUPPLIES WITHIN LIMITS CREATED BY MECHANICAL-TECHNICAL DEFICIENCIES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL. FROM OUR OPTIC, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT MINHEALTH IS MAKING ALMOST ALL THE RIGHT MOVES TO ASSURE SMOOTH, FASTEST POSSIBLE MOVEMENT OF SUPPLIES FROM PORT OF ENTRY TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN POPULATION. IT IS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT HE CANNOT HOPE INCREASE EFFICIENCY THIS OPERATION WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP.

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SPECIFICALLY, THIS MEANS A STEADY, ASSURED SUPPLY OF SPARE PARTS (PRINCIPALLY BERLIET AND MERCEDES) AVAILABLE ONLY FROM EUROPE AND SERVICES HANDFUL OF EXPATRIATE MECHANICS TO BEEF-UP LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMERCIAL REPAIR FACILITIES. BECAUSE HE HAS SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN THESE TWO NECESSITIES, MINHEALTH IS BEING OBLIGED TO REPLICATE VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE 160-TRUCK FLEET PAINFULLY BUILT UP SINCE LATE 1972 AT MASSIVE EXPENSE TO GIRM AND FOREIGN DROUGHT DONORS. SHURTLEFF

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Message Attributes

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